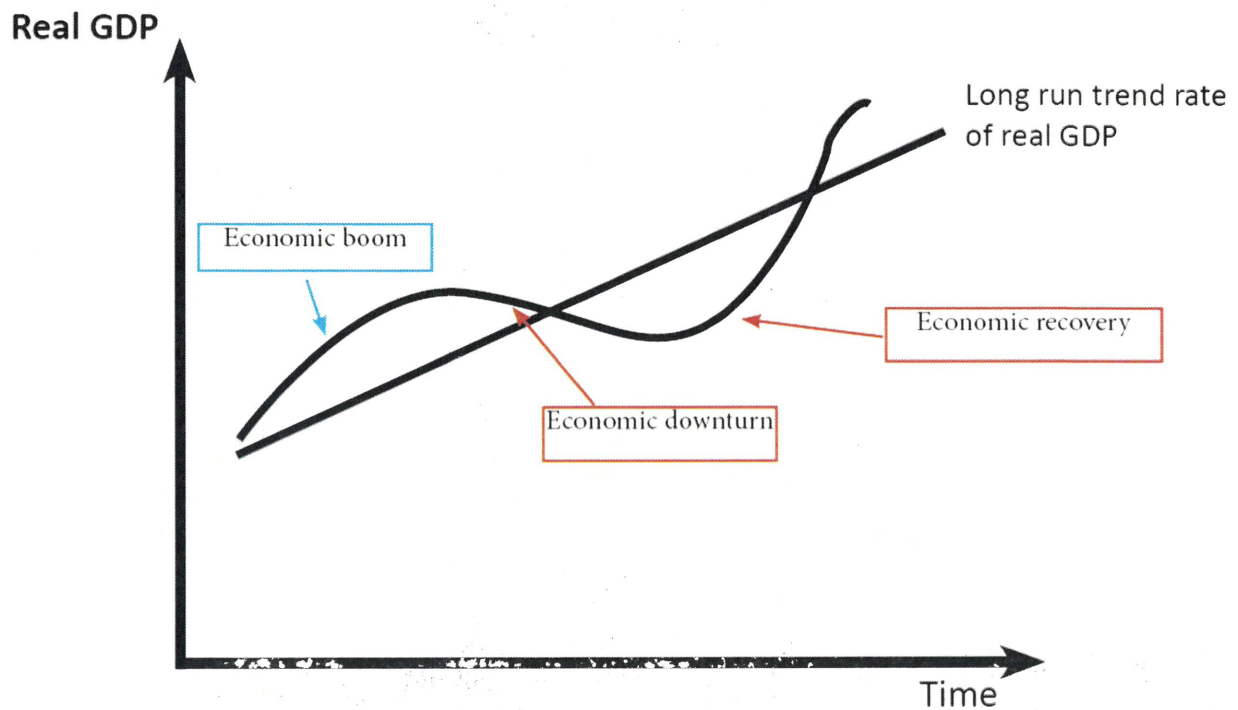


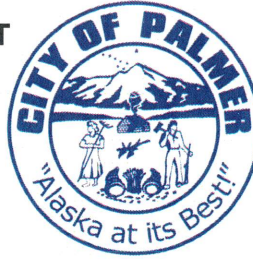


**City of Palmer**  
**Board of Economic Development**

**April 3, 2023**



**BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 3, 2023, 6 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
231 W. EVERGREEN AVENUE, PALMER  
[www.palmerak.org](http://www.palmerak.org)**



CHAIRMAN	VACANT
BOARD MEMBER	Christopher Chappel
BOARD MEMBER	Vacant
BOARD MEMBER	Barbara Hunt
BOARD MEMBER	Janet Kincaid
BOARD MEMBER	Lorie Koppenberg
BOARD MEMBER	LOUIS YOUNG

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:  
CITY MANAGER – John Moosey

## **AGENDA**

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Organization of the Board
  - 1. Election of Chairperson
  - 2. Election of Vice Chairperson
- E. Approval of Agenda
- F. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings
- G. Reports
  - 1. Manager/Staff Report
- H. Audience Participation
- I. Unfinished Business
- J. New Business
  - 1. Committee of the Whole: Discuss IM 23-001, Palmer's 2022 Economic Development Strategic Plan – 2023 Update and Work Plan Update (note: action may be taken by the board following the committee of the whole)
  - 2. Committee of the Whole: Discuss IM 23-002, Matanuska-Susitna Borough establishment of Metropolitan Planning Organization in an urbanized area
- K. Board Member Comments
- L. Adjournment



## **New Business**



**CITY OF PALMER  
BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 23-001**

**SUBJECT:** Annual Update of Palmer's Economic Development Plan

**AGENDA OF:** April 3, 2023

The BED reviews and updates the City of Palmer's annual Economic Development Plan and then presents to Palmer City Council for consideration during the City Council and Board of Economic Development joint meeting. The plan shall be consistent with City Council policies and the City's Comprehensive Plan. The current plan was originally developed in 2011 with yearly updates and was based on the City of Palmer's Comprehensive Plan's summary of goals for economic vitality.

2020 is a census year, demographic and economic data will be utilized to update the Economic Development Plan when the data becomes available from the US Census. To date this information has not been released to the city.



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARD OF  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO  
CITY COUNCIL

**2022 CITY OF PALMER**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

## Community Economic Development Goals

Goal 1 ... Strengthen Palmer's position as the preferred location as the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's institutional and utility co-operative hub.

Goal 2 ... Encourage expansion of medical, health-care, technology and research-related economic sectors, and other professional jobs in the Palmer area to make this the medical, health-care and vocational career center for Southcentral Alaska.

Goal 3 ... Strengthen Palmer's role as a retail and professional services hub and as a unique place to shop for residents of Palmer, area residents and visitors.

Goal 4 ... Strengthen Palmer as a tourism destination and hub for travel through the southern Matanuska-Susitna area.

Goal 5 ... Strengthen efforts to improve Palmer's quality of life by supporting Palmer as the agricultural center of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley.

Goal 6... Promote beautification of Palmer's open space and parks.

Goal 7 ... Maintain quality residential neighborhoods and promote a diverse range of quality housing from high density to single family housing which satisfies the needs of all sectors of the housing market.

Goal 8 ... Provide the necessary public infrastructure to support and retain existing industrial uses and expand industrial development within the community.

Goal 9 ... Palmer remains and continues to grow as the industrial education and career center of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Goal 10 ... Continue to develop and market the municipal airport to maximize its economic benefit to the community.

Goal 11 ... Increase marketing of Palmer and its diverse attractions, events and location.

Goal 12... Create a business-friendly environment for commerce and industry.

Goal 13...Review Economic Development Plan Each August and prepare report on progress in implementing Goals and Objectives

Goal 14... Study the feasibility of annexing property into the city limits to prepare for future commercial and industrial growth and to preserve the character of the community.

## Economic Development Strategic Plan Update 2022

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### **Goal 1 ... Strengthen Palmer's position as the preferred location as the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's institutional and utility co-operative hub.**

**Objective A** – Maintain existing institutions and secure new institutions by developing an action plan with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Matanuska-Susitna School District, Job Corps, the University, state agencies and Justice System to determine and pursue a very specific list of action items necessary to meet their long-term needs.

**Objective B** – Develop an action plan with the Hospital, Clinics, and other health-care providers to determine and pursue a very specific list of action items necessary to meet their long-term needs.

### **Goal 2 ... Encourage expansion of medical, health-care, technology and research-related economic sectors, and other professional jobs in the Palmer area to make this the medical, health-care and vocational career center for Southcentral Alaska.**

**Objective A** – Promote the Palmer area as a hub of higher education by working with the University of Alaska, Alaska Pacific University and other educational institutions to increase the number of highly trained medical and health care specialist and technology and research related specialist who are available in the community.

1. Determine what new programs might be developed in the Palmer area, and how the City might help these institutions to expand.
2. Encourage the development of learning opportunities in medical and healthcare fields at local institutions of higher learning and the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center.

**Objective B** - Market the community to desired businesses, including technology and research-based businesses, and professional businesses such as law, medicine and veterinary science.

### **Goal 3 ... Strengthen Palmer's role as a retail and professional services hub and as a unique place to shop for residents of Palmer, area residents and visitors.**

**Objective A** – Work with the Planning & Zoning Commission to provide space for commercial expansion through the development of a new central business zoning district or zoning overlay.

## Economic Development Strategic Plan Update 2022

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**Objective B** – Promote Palmer as a more attractive retail and professional service destination.

**Objective C** – Actively pursue infrastructure improvements and identify areas appropriate for developing new areas and redeveloping vacant properties for commercial general development.

**Objective D** – Identify need and options for effective public parking in downtown and within the city.

1. Resolve fee in lieu of formula and parking waiver issues.
2. Examine interest in forming Special Assessment District or Business Improvement District.

### **Goal 4 ... Strengthen Palmer as a tourism destination and hub for travel through the southern Matanuska-Susitna area.**

**Objective A** – Preserve, improve and celebrate Palmer’s historic character; develop design guidelines for the historic district.

**Objective B** – Support efforts to improve and promote community attractions, including cultural facilities and multiple trails systems. Improve linkages between attractions.

**Objective C** – Build on the success of existing community events, including the Alaska State Fair.

**Objective D** – Support efforts to attract more team sports activities, sporting events and outdoor activities in and around Palmer.

**Objective E** – Establish, improve and maintain city-wide parks and recreation facilities and programs.

**Objective F** – Discuss and study the possibility of a permanent Friday Fling/Farmer’s Market area as well as a public stage.

### **Goal 5 ... Strengthen efforts to improve Palmer’s quality of life by supporting Palmer as the agricultural center of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley.**

**Objective A** - Promote distribution, awareness of, and sales of local agricultural products.

**Objective B** - Promote and expand farmers' market opportunities within the city limits and the greater Palmer area.



## Economic Development Strategic Plan Update 2022

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**Objective C** - Collaborate with state funded organizations and the agricultural community to promote Alaska Grown products.

**Objective D** - Open dialogue with the agricultural community to promote agricultural products and agricultural heritage.

### **Goal 6... Promote beautification of Palmer's open space and parks.**

**Objective A** – Establish, improve, and maintain neighborhood parks and recreation facilities and programs.

### **Goal 7 ... Maintain quality residential neighborhoods and promote a diverse range of quality housing from high density to single family housing which satisfies the needs of all sectors of the housing market.**

**Objective A** - Encourage a diverse range of quality housing, from attractive higher density housing to housing for a more rural setting.

**Objective B** - Encourage new housing developments to have adequate access to transportation, employment opportunities, services, and social and support networks.

**Objective C** – Encourage infill development and higher density housing and prepare new zoning standards and design guidelines to ensure higher density housing is high quality.

**Objective D** – Encourage the development of areas for single family housing appealing to the upper end of the housing market.

**Objective E** – Encourage rehabilitation of older residential structures.

**Objective F** – Promote continued development and maintenance of high quality elder care facilities and senior citizen campuses in Palmer.

**Objective G** – Review code enforcement process and provide a report with recommended actions to City Council on a quarterly basis to gain prospective of property owners and residents understanding and compliance with city standards to protect the long-term stability of neighborhoods and Palmer's economic vitality.

## Economic Development Strategic Plan Update 2022

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### **Goal 8 ... Provide the necessary public infrastructure to support and retain existing industrial uses and expand industrial development within the community.**

**Objective A** – Review and identify logistical, environmental and other beneficial resources in the Palmer area available to attract new technology industries and prepare a map of existing utility lines and anticipated utility network expansions that serve developable property in the Palmer area.

1. Develop a survey questionnaire to determine what industrial sector needs to invest and develop in Palmer.

**Objective B** – Review current infrastructure master plans to ensure they place a priority on maintaining effective municipal services.

**Objective C** – Ensure that adequate areas are identified within the city for industrial growth.

### **Goal 9 ... Palmer remains and continues to grow as the industrial education and career center of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.**

**Objective A** – Promote vocational, aviation, technical and career training centers and opportunities within the greater Palmer area to prepare individuals for a global marketplace.

### **Goal 10 ... Continue to develop and market the municipal airport to maximize its economic benefit to the community.**

**Objective A** – Promote the Palmer Municipal Airport as a site for air taxis, aircraft maintenance and repair companies, flight schools, and aircraft rental and leasing businesses.

**Objective B** - Operate the Airport in a balanced manner, and as an integrated function of the whole community. Activities of the airport which generate revenue to the City are desirable, however, not at the risk of diminishing the quality of life for the residents of the City.

### **Goal 11 ... Increase marketing of Palmer and its diverse attractions, events and location.**

**Objective A** - Collaborate with the Palmer Visitors Center, the Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce, the Mat-Su Visitors and Convention Center, and other organizations to actively promote Palmer.

## Economic Development Strategic Plan Update 2022

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1. Develop multimedia promotional material showcasing the attributes of Palmer as a business friendly, geographically key location.
2. Budget funding for development and publish quality brochure for Palmer as a marketing tool.

**Objective B** - Work to maintain and improve Palmer's quality of life. Continually enhance hiking and biking trails, parks, health care resources, downtown upgrades, etc.

**Objective C** – Continue to develop and promote the city owned Golf Course, Community Center (Depot), and MTA Events Center as economic factors.

**Goal 12... Create a business friendly environment for commerce and industry.**

**Objective A** – Implement online business transaction with the City, for example electronic filing of sale tax.

**Goal 13... Review Economic Development Plan Each January and prepare report on progress in implementing Goals and Objectives.**

**Goal 14... Study the feasibility of annexing property into the city limits to prepare for future commercial and industrial growth and to preserve the character of the community.**

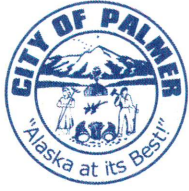
**Objective A** – Develop an annexation document that clearly explains pros and cons of annexation.

**Objective B** – Consider where future annexation should logically occur.

**Objective C** – Prepare transition plan regarding potential future zoning.

**Objective D** – Study and make recommendations regarding new proposed zoning districts: Central Business District and Highway Commercial District.

**Goal 15... Acknowledge and consider Palmer's unique connectivity and pedestrian access with all existing and future developments.**



**CITY OF PALMER  
BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 23-002**

**SUBJECT:** Matanuska-Susitna Borough establishment of Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

**AGENDA OF:** April 3, 2023

Communities with populations of over 50,000 are required by the Federal Government to form an MPO. As a result of the 2020 US Census parts of the Mat-Su borough meet that criteria and must form an MPO.

Staff will provide the BED an overview of the mandatory Metropolitan Planning Organization within an urbanized area of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. No action is required at this point. This Informational Memorandum is to update the BED with the latest information.

# Transportation Planning & Funding

In the Mat-Su is about to change

MPO

# MATSU Valley Planning (MVP) for Transportation

Metropolitan  
Planning Organization



## What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

An MPO is an organization created to carry out the transportation planning process within a metropolitan area. The MPO is the policy board, designated by the Governor, and carries out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This process is done in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators and under the guidance of a robust public participation plan. Federal legislation passed in 1962 requires that any Urbanized Area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000 will create a Metropolitan Planning Organization. The definition of “urban” is defined by development density within or outside of municipal limits, meaning that unincorporated areas surrounding municipalities are also defined as part of an urbanized area, just as areas outside the cities of Wasilla and Palmer are part of the urban cluster.

## Why do we need an MPO?

Our Population is growing and because of that, the Federal Government requires we form one.



# The Department of Commerce

will designate a portion of the Mat-Su as a Qualifying Urban Area, with a population "cluster" of over 50,000 for Census 2020. An official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must be established in the Mat-Su area to continue to receive Federal Highway Funding.

**April 2022- expected census designation**



# INTRODUCTION

What does an MPO do?

"BY LAW, THE MPO IS DEFINED AS THE POLICY BOARD COMPRISED OF LOCAL OFFICIALS."

- ✓ Carries out transportation planning activities-based on population growth and community need
- ✓ Directs State and Federal Funds for road/transportation projects for motorized and non-motorized users
- ✓ Allows for local control of transportation decisions
- ✓ **Engages the public** in transportation planning and projects

## Organized

- How is the MPO organized?

A non-profit Organization or Corporation. Governance is managed by a board of directors- but the board of directors are made up of elected officials of the regional governments and policy makers of transportation NGO's

- State/Borough/City/Tribes

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Each entity will have representation on the policy board and together they will review and approve recommendations from MPO staff and the Technical Committee about the transportations infrastructure needed to support the communities needs.

Then the State of Alaska will allocate State and Federal funding to develop the projects within the MPO boundary

## Policy Board

- Policy Board must consist of units of local government who represent a minimum of 75% of the existing metropolitan planning area population. (including largest incorporated city)

### Pre-MPO has recommended:

#### Policy board consisting of:

- Palmer
- MSB (3)
- Wasilla
- AK DOT
- Knik Tribe Representative
  - Chickaloon Village

#### Technical Committee Consisting of:

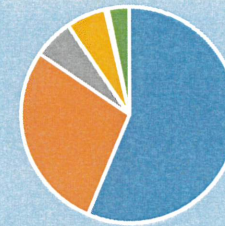
- Representatives such as planners, engineers, and other specialists from the city of Palmer City of Wasilla, MSB Planning and Public Works
  - ADOT & PF Planning and Pre-Construction
    - ADEC Air Quality Division
    - Alaska Railroad Corporation
    - Trucking industry Advocate
  - Mat-Su Road Service Area Advisory Board Chair
    - Public transit Provider
  - Mat-Su School District Operations
    - Knik Tribe
    - Chickaloon Native Village
  - Trails and Parks Representative

# Federal Funding

- How much MONEY does Alaska get from Federal Highway Administration?

NHPP	\$306,715,836
STP	\$153,320,470
HSIP	\$32,384,409
CMAQ	\$29,076,413
Planning	\$2,402,700
Freight	\$17,206,531

FFY19 FAST Act Funding For Alaska



■ NHPP ■ STP ■ HSIP ■ CMAQ ■ Planning ■ Freight

## Acronyms

NHPP – National Highway Performance Program    STP – Surface Transportation Program    HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program  
CMAQ – Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality    FAST – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation    STBGP - Surface Transportation Block Grant

# MPO Statewide Allocation

- Communities >5000-200,000 \$31.2 M
  - ✓ Juneau
  - ✓ Sitka
  - ✓ Ketchikan
  - ✓ Wasilla
  - ✓ Kenai
  - ✓ Kodiak
  - ✓ Bethel
  - ✓ Palmer
  - ✓ Homer
  - ✓ Soldotna
- Communities >50,000<200,000 \$8.3 M
  - ✓ Fairbanks
- Communities > 200,000 \$27.3 M
  - ✓ Anchorage

# Types of MPO Hosting

- **Independent MPO**

This is a truly independent agency. The MPO must meet all of its operating needs by itself. The most expensive type of MPO. Provides all payroll costs, administrative and capital needs.

- **Leaning Independent**

Independent MPO that “leans” on one of its members for support. The MPO receives some services under a severable contract.

- **Component MPO**

This type of hosting relationship, the MPO functions are separated from all other functions of the host. (Department or Division)

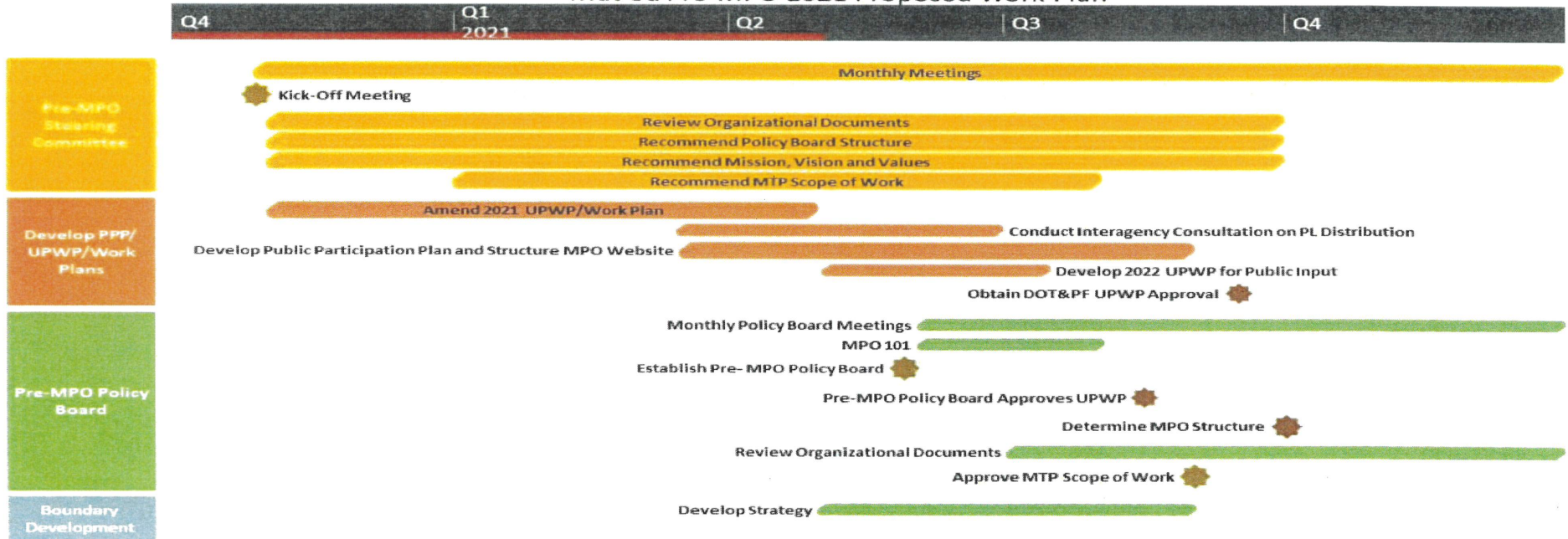
- **Dual Purpose MPO**

This type of hosting relationship, the host leverages MPO planning funds to maintain transportation planning staff. Performs both MPO planning and local government transportation planning functions.

- **All-In-One Agency**

This type of agency does not differentiate between MPO functions, non-MPO transportation functions and all other functions of the broader agency.

## Mat-Su Pre-MPO 2021 Proposed Work Plan



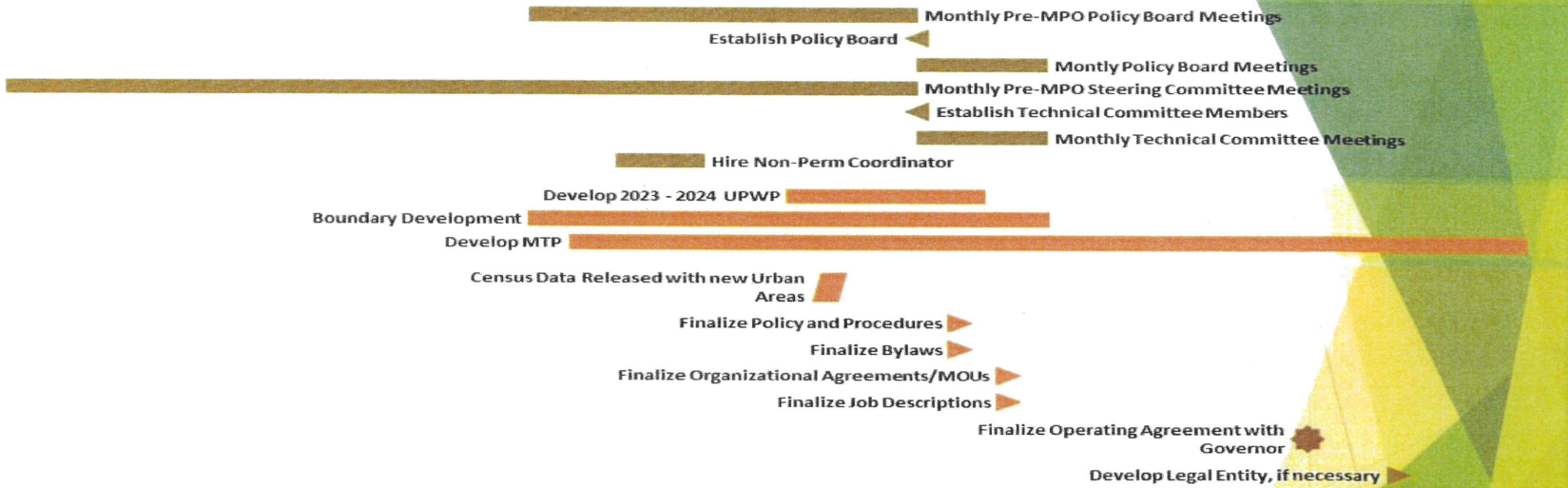
Amended 05/02/2021

Q4 | Q1 2021 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 2022 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 2023 | Q2 | Q3

Populate the Organization

Develop Required Plans

Develop MPO Organization

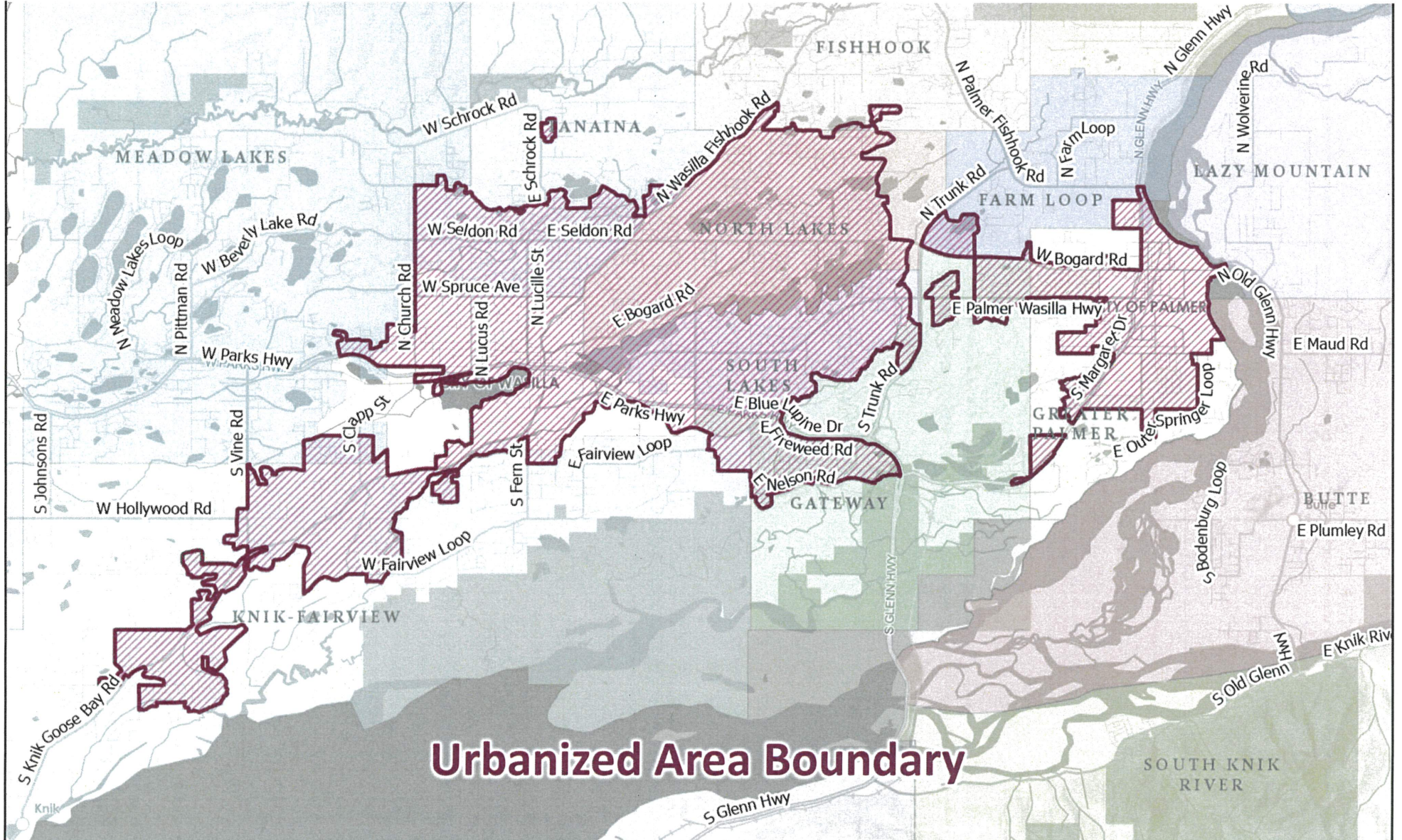


2022 Mat-Su MPO Draft Work Plan



# Strategy of Boundary Development

- Consider 2010 and 2020 Census Data
- Consider where people are moving (where are they building?)
- Where will the growth occur in the next 20 years?
- Consider any available models, forecasts and GIS mapping scenarios
- Consider road miles of each area
- Consider air quality conditions
- Consult subject matter experts (Platting, Planning, Zoning, Real Estate, Economist)



## Urbanized Area Boundary